

Yessy Byl

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YB: My name is Yessy Byl. I work as the temporary foreign worker advocate with the Alberta Federation of Labour.

Q: How did you get involved?

YB: My background is labour law. For many years I've been a volunteer lawyer with the Edmonton Community Legal Centre. In the summer of 2006 I got a call from the Legal Centre saying, we have some people who came here from Romania who are foreign workers and we don't know what to do for them. I'd never heard of temporary foreign workers at that point, to be honest. It was a situation where a labour broker was bringing tradespeople over from Romania, placing them with various companies here in Edmonton, charging the companies a lot of money, and paying the workers a lot less – a real patronizing man too. He kept calling these men boys; that really bothered me. But he also did things like he rented a house in Wetaskiwin and put six grownup men in it, and they had to pay their own cab fare from Wetaskiwin to Nisku every day to work. It was a terrible situation. So I started learning a lot about TFW problems on that file. Because it was a work-related issue, I also started talking with the Federation of Labour. I remember the beginning of December of 2006 I had a Christmas party and the Romanian workers came to my house and I invited Gil McGowan and Tom Fuller. I know Gil had been involved somewhat in policy issues, but he sat down and talked to them, and things steamrolled from there. The Federation of Labour saw that there was a real need for assistance for TFWs. In early 2007 I signed on as a TFW advocate, providing legal help for TFWs. It's been a saga since then.

Q: Talk about the TFW program.

YB: I think it's important to understand the history of the program. What we have developed in Canada is a guest worker program that is very much like the European program or very much like the European program was. That's just mind-boggling in and of itself because we've all seen the race riots, the problems that Europe has been experiencing, and we're heading down that same road. But before 2002 what we had was something very different. We had a TFW program that was aimed at people like visiting professors. If you came to the University of Alberta for a visiting professor's chair or for a research project or something like that, you would come through the TFW program. There are many multinational corporations that moved people through the programs and they'll come to Canada for two years and then transfer to their US office. So all the people that came were highly skilled workers, people with assured jobs, people who did not need any kind of protection in terms of their employment. This was a longstanding program and it worked well for the group that it was intended. What happened by 2002 though, we had a real problem. We had a booming economy, a need for more workers, and a totally dysfunctional immigration system. It was taking at that point up to five years to process an application for permanent residency. There was no way to quickly respond to the kinds of labour shortages we had. The other area that was of concern was we suddenly had a real shortage of workers in low-skilled jobs. The best example, and probably the motivator for our low-skilled program, was the meatpacking industry in Manitoba. Brandon, Manitoba has a huge Maple Leaf plant; they could not get people to work there. They were saying, we need people, we need people. So the response by the federal government in 2002 was to take the TFW program we have and totally shift it. Now it was opened up to low-skilled workers and it was opened up to attract skilled workers –it became a completely different market – to attract skilled workers as an alternative to permanent immigration. We've got a labour shortage in Alberta, for example. Cooks is a good example. We couldn't get enough cooks in our restaurant. They're considered skilled workers. It takes too long to immigrate so let's bring them in as TFWs and then you address that labour shortage really quickly. But nobody sat down and sat about: what is this going to do? Have we got a program in place that protects people who are coming with very tenuous rights? If you come as a TFW, you have no status except as a worker, and your status is completely dictated by that work permit

you're issued, which says you're only allowed to work for this employer in this job in this location. You can't change out of that without going through the whole formal process of getting a new work permit. We've got this program that was set up for engineers and professors and those kinds of people for truly temporary work, and we've just slotted a whole group of other people into it without thinking it through.

Q: How are these people brought in?

YB: The current reality is that this is now a migrant worker program which also represents a sort of contracting-out of our immigration. I'm just going to backtrack a little bit to say that what happened is that of course none of these jobs are temporary. The whole thing is a fiction, to just bring in people without rights. These jobs in the meatpacking plants, in Tim Horton's, in the corporate offices or engineers in the field, those are all permanent jobs. So that's the first issue. We're not talking about temporary; it's only temporary in that any job in this country is susceptible to the economic downturns. It doesn't matter how permanent your job is, you might get laid off at some point – that's the only temporary aspect. But it's completely false to call them temporary jobs. So we have this permanent need and of course people were coming as TFWs. One of the good changes, and this is something the Federation of Labour in Alberta lobbied for, in about 2008 the government said, if you worked here for two years as a skilled worker you could apply for permanent residency under what is now called the Canadian Experience Class. What they did was create a new avenue for permanent residency for skilled workers, not for the low-skilled workers. Hey, we don't want low-skilled scum in our country. I don't know what the problem is, especially considering most of our ancestors came here as low-skilled workers. But we've become very elitist in this country. So there is now an avenue for skilled workers to come as TFWs and become permanent residents. If you look at it in that way, who gets to pick the TFWs who are coming here? It's not the government; it's the corporations in this country. I really think that this program has become a form of contracting out our immigration system. But it's not just contracting out our immigration system, because of course even if you come as a skilled worker you're caught, you are totally vulnerable to that employer. If they lay you off a

month before your two years is complete, you're completely hooped. It's just appalling. There's no federal laws that protect that person. There's nothing that says if you as an employer have brought somebody here, then you're obligated to keep that person working for two years. . . .

Let me talk a little bit about the process so you understand why workers are so vulnerable. The whole process of bringing TFWs here is a two-part process. The employer has to apply for labour market opinion through HRSDC [ed. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada]. Once they get an LMO [ed. Labour Market Opinion] saying that hiring a foreign worker (this is what an LMO is) will not prejudice Canadian workers. Of course it's all a fiction. But anyway, then the worker applies for a work permit through immigration. You've got an employer-driven process and a supposedly employee-driven process in terms of getting the work permit. The problem is that the work permit says you are to work for this employer in this particular job in this location. The fact that it ties the worker to a particular employer is the reason why we have such exploitation. It's interesting, because if you look at the legislation, it doesn't require that the work permit be tied to an employer. We have said – that's the Federation of Labour and myself – have said, issue work permits that say, you are able to come to Alberta and work as a welder. The legislation allows for that. In that case, if that happened, then if an employer were being abusive, then the person would be free to say, I have a work permit that lets me go down the road and apply for a job as a welder there. But the government won't do it. I guess it's better to have an exploitable workforce. I don't know. I'm not going to guess what's on their mind, but that's the result, very clearly the result. When we talk about exploitation of foreign workers, it's not just their status in Canada. It starts right at the beginning, at the recruitment stages. I suppose it starts because Canada historically has always had a reputation of being a country that was a good place to immigrate to. We haven't had a reputation as a guest worker country or as a migrant worker country. We've always had a reputation as an immigrant country. One of the things I found is that the vast majority of people who come here under the TFW program since 2002 come here because they want to immigrate, not because they want to work temporarily in Canada. That's part of the whole shift in the program. If you were to talk to people before 2002, people didn't come to immigrate; they came generally to work

temporarily, and that's completely changed. You now have this huge group of people out in the world who want to immigrate to Canada and see the foreign worker program as a way of doing that. There's another scenario just ripe for abuse. There are thousands of people just stepping up to jump in and abuse and exploit those people. These people are called recruiters. I'm always a tad nervous about making generalizations. I'm a lawyer. But in my personal experience the majority of recruiters exploit that desire to immigrate to Canada. They start by charging people recruitment fees to come here. In Alberta that's illegal, but it doesn't stop anybody. Recruitment fees vary anywhere from \$3,000 – keep in mind we're talking about people working in underdeveloped countries where \$3,000 is a fortune – to \$15,000, which is a huge fortune. So that's where it starts. Right from the beginning people are having to pay a lot of money to come here to work. Then they arrive in Canada and sometimes there's no job at all and they're basically dumped. That still happens. The other scenario that I see a lot of is they come to Canada with a work permit and the recruiters just place them somewhere else with a different employer and a different job. They're saying, but I'm supposed to work here. The recruiter says, don't worry about it, I'll take care of it, the paperwork is on its way. So you've got that whole level and then the government jumps in and just adds to that exploitation. If one of those workers gets caught working for the wrong employer in the wrong job, guess who pays for it? It's not the recruiter. As a matter of fact, Canadian Border Agency doesn't prosecute any of these recruiters or employers, but they deport the workers, which is another exploitation of foreign workers. It doesn't matter which way you look at this.

Q: Which countries are they coming from?

YB: The single largest source country is now The Philippines. Previous to 2002 most TFWs came from Europe or the US. Now most foreign workers come from underdeveloped countries – Latin America, Philippines, India – those are the three largest groups that I've seen. The fact that they're coming from countries where English is (although in the Philippines English isn't as much of an issue), but other countries it's been more of an issue. Languages issues lend to the exploitation.

Q: Talk about the TFWs' experience when they land here.

YB: They end up coming here. If they're a low-skilled worker, the government requires that there's a contract of employment which sets out hours of work, pay rates, a number of things. Often foreign workers will find they're not being paid that rate of pay. They're not being paid overtime; that's a really common complaint. One of the worst cases--this was in a fast food industry--, I talked to a foreign worker who was a counter clerk. They had asked their employer, aren't I supposed to be paid overtime? You know what the employer said? Oh no, our overtime laws. . .

So this young man had done a little bit of reading. One of the interesting things I find is a lot of employers assume because people come from non-English speaking countries that they know nothing and they can take advantage of people. People are not stupid; people are intelligent beings regardless of where they come from. Anyway, he had read up on the laws and knew that there were overtime laws. His employer said to him, oh no, our overtime laws don't apply to TFWs, so I don't have to pay you overtime according to the law. It's just appalling, it really is appalling. It's not just pay issues; it's all kinds of things: hours of work – contract of employment says you're going to be working full-time and they end up with part-time hours or variable hours. Housing is another huge issue. For low-skilled workers the employer is supposed to ensure that foreign workers have adequate housing at a reasonable rental rate. So what some of these employers figure reasonable means is buying... there's a lot of people making a lot of money. They buy a house, put 12 foreign workers in it, charge them all \$300 a month for rent and of course they have to pay utilities, no maintenance, just some appalling housing conditions. Of course people feel like they have no, and people are being told that they have no choice. You want to work here; you have to rent a room in my house. If you move out, you get fired. So they get doubly taken advantage of, not just in work but in this rental market.

Q: Has there been any progress? Who's there to help them?

YB: Your first question, the answers are no, no, no. I think it's worthwhile looking a bit at the history. Alberta actually has some more progressive laws and services than most of

Canada. Manitoba mind you, I keep saying to people I want to move to Manitoba. They're the only place that actually treats foreign workers in a respectful and meaningful way. But Alberta actually in the scheme of things has some good programs. What they did a number of years ago is they set up in Employment Standards a dedicated office to auditing employers who employ foreign workers. This is a great program. The program was supposed to include four employment centres in Edmonton, four in Calgary. Currently I think they're two and two, and they're all going crazy. So while you've got a very good program, they are severely short-staffed. So it becomes totally inadequate. I've got a case where I've got some foreign workers. Employment Standards complains they're being paid substantially less than the contract. We filed complaints two years ago; still hasn't gone to trial. Those people have been working for two years. Fortunately in their case we were able to keep them here in Canada. A lot of people end up going home in the meantime, so they lose the remedy. That's what employers count on. Don't pay them the money and eventually they'll have to leave. If you don't put proper enforcement and staffing resources into programs, they become meaningless. We have a law on the books that says it's illegal to charge recruitment fees. We have no staff to pursue it. Justice has said, well actually the way it's worded it's almost impossible to enforce. So there are no prosecutions. People say, well it's illegal to charge recruitment fees, but everybody's doing it and nothing gets done about it. Then we have finally an office called Temporary Foreign Worker Advisory Office, again a government office. It was supposed to be staffed by four people in Edmonton, four people in Calgary. It was supposed to be an advocate's kind of office; it's not. The most pressing need that foreign workers have is usually that they don't have a job or they need a new job, and that office has no resources to find that work. Give people the tools to do what's needed. The other thing that Alberta has that is wonderful is that we fund settlement agencies to help foreign workers. That doesn't happen in most of the provinces. So foreign workers have no support system at all. It's usually organizations funded by churches, for example, that might be able to help. But there are no government settlement services. That's primarily because the federal government says, oh we're not funding programs for foreign workers. Even though skilled foreign workers are on a pathway to permanent residency, sorry we're not going to let them take ESL classes, for example. I don't get this, but anyway. So Alberta does fund

settlement agencies, but the funding parameters are really narrow. It's basically, from what I understand, they're funded to refer people. But refer them to what? There's nothing for people. You can send them to the Edmonton Community Legal Centre for legal help, you can send them to Employment Standards, but you could do that anyway. What they need is actual help with employment, advocacy with landlords or advocacy with employers, that kind of thing. That's not actually part of that funding mandate. The program is there, the ideas are there, but it's so limited.

Q: What about those whose time has run out?

YB: What happens is that the guest workers with the "other" status is something less status, and the ghettoization of workers with lesser status. All we have to do is look at Europe. But with respect to undocumented workers, we just have to look at the US; that's a better example. The US has migrant workers come, it's time-limited to the end of the year, whatever – that's it, you're done. But of course there's millions of undocumented workers in the US. Our TFW program has resulted in the same thing. We have probably over 100,000 undocumented workers in Alberta. We have hundreds of thousands of undocumented workers in Ontario. People come here to immigrate; they have nothing to go home to. There are no jobs back home. Plus if they go back home they probably still owe the recruiter money back home; so they can't go home to that. So they stay and they end up working underground, which of course creates all kinds of labour issues. All we have to do is look at the US to see what happens. The funny thing is, it's not funny, but everybody who's worked in this program for the last years have talked about, this is what's going to happen. The government knew this was going to happen and I know that government people said, what are you going to do when you shut down the labour market opinion and people can't stay? They're going to stay. Then what happens? They have no healthcare. If they have children here, children can't go to school. They get bounced out of the schools. They end up working. I've heard lots of stories about people working and then not being paid at all for their work. The employer's saying, okay what are you going to do about it? If you go to Employment Standards, I'll just report you to Immigration. So

we've created this huge horrifyingly vulnerable group of undocumented workers, and it's primarily a result of this program.

Q: Have you encountered TFW family problems?

YB: Family values only apply to white people and Canadians, that's it. Family values do not apply to TFWs. That's so hypocritical. The first problem is low-skilled workers won't be able to bring their families. Visitors' visas for families of low-skilled workers are routinely denied. We just tell people, forget it. Even if you want to bring your family, you'll never be able to get them here. So that's number one. Number two, even if you're a skilled worker, I've had lots of cases of families of skilled workers not being able to get to Canada. Get this: this is the stupid irony of this program. The legislation says you can come as a foreign worker. If Immigration is satisfied, you'll leave the country. We already know; we all know people are coming here to stay. As a matter of fact, we encourage them to stay, because we have the Canadian Experience class now. So we expect the skilled workers to stay even though the legislation says, no, no, no, you're not supposed to stay, you're supposed to intend on returning home. That's what's being used to deny families entry visas to Canada.

Q: What happens to the families back home?

YB: That's a good question. If you're from Latin America, you now become vulnerable to extortion. Not just extortion, people have been murdered. We've all heard the stories of the drug wars and the violence. . . We've all heard about the stories of the drug cartel wars and the gangs in El Salvador. What happens in neighbourhoods is that people know when you have a family member who comes to Canada and works as a foreign worker. The gangs come to the family's door and say, okay we know your husband or your wife or your son or daughter is sending home money; we want a share of the action. It's really common.

Q: What proportion of the employers are the big chains?

YB: The problem with the big chains is a lot of people are coming here to work for big chain fast-food outlets. But all those big chains operate on a franchise basis. You might have one outlet that is in fact part of a big chain but is a mom-and-pop operation. But there are lot more that are not so mom-and-popish, and people will own a number of franchises. Those people have the most difficulty in getting staff but they're also the most likely to exploit workers. We hear horror stories of the franchise owner who says, unless you sign a waiver saying I don't have to pay your return airfare back to The Philippines, which is required for low-skilled workers, I'm not going to apply to renew your LMO. So what are you going to do about that? Or if you don't pay for the processing fees that I'm being charged for your LMO, I'm not going to apply for you. So somebody who works for \$10.50 an hour has to pay \$3,000 in legal fees, for example. Those are all the mom-and-pop operations, the so-called mom-and-pop operations. This is not universal. There are some franchise owners that I have personally met and talked to their employees, who are very diligent about treating people properly and in compliance with the laws. The problem is that there are others who aren't doing that, and nobody's doing anything. Even the franchise overall, the franchise operations seem to not be doing anything about insuring that that doesn't happen.

Q: How is this globalizing the workforce?

YB: It's interesting to see the development of the use of migrant workers. It's not just a Canadian phenomenon, by the way. The UN has also talked about the increased use of migrant workers in the world. Their dividing line is 9-11, which is interesting. But I don't think it's just 9-11, I think it's an inevitable result of globalization of the world economy. If we globalize production, why are we so surprised when we start talking about globalization of the workforce as well? If you think in those terms it makes more sense. You send goods over to this country, you send them back. You send workers over to that country, you send them back. The problem is on an intellectual level you might think it works, that workers can move around. But you don't take into account human rights and the needs of people to have permanent residency, to have rights to civil liberties, those

kinds of things. People are not commodities to be moved around in the global market, and yet that's what this program does.

Q: What have been the impacts of the recession?

YB: I don't know how to put this, but I think the last two years have been a complete nightmare for TFWs. A number of things happened. As far as the government was concerned, foreign workers really became the expendable people. Keep in mind what I said earlier – these jobs that foreign workers were filling were not temporary jobs, they were permanent jobs that were not being filled by Canadians. We bring foreign workers here, they want to immigrate, they want to stay in Canada, and they contribute to our economy. All of a sudden the economy starts declining and gee whiz, we've got high unemployment, we have to get rid of the foreign workers. Even that's a bit of a fiction, because we only get rid of the foreign workers who are in the slightly higher-paying jobs. There's lots of foreign workers still coming into Canada during the recession. But anybody who's got a reasonable job, the government now says, we're not going to renew LMOs, you have to fire people who are in jobs who've been doing those jobs for years and who have seniority rights. I think that's appalling. I agree we should not be bringing in more foreign workers when our unemployment rates are so high. The unemployment rate of new immigrants in this country is like 20 some percent. Why aren't we putting resources into ensuring that unemployment rate goes down, not bringing in more people that we can abuse and exploit and throw out when we don't want them anymore. But once they come here, once foreign workers come here and contribute to Canada, do the job, then they deserve to be recognized for their contribution. They should be entitled to stay, and they're not. The government truly shut down the LMO so people could not continue in the jobs they had. That really created a huge undocumented workforce. The other thing that happened is, as far as I'm concerned, it really fostered a lot of racism. Because the government was still allowing more foreign workers to come here, Canadians were saying, I'm unemployed and I'm seeing foreigners in those jobs. Some of it I think the government should've shut down because, quite frankly, you as a Canadian did not want that job two years ago. The person who's in the job, that's their job. That's their job, it's

not yours. You don't get to say, you're a foreigner, get the hell out, I want it now. What kind of an attitude is that? Excuse me, I've been in Canada for two generations, I get to bump out the permanent residents who just came here 10 years ago. We don't do that in Canada; of course we don't. But the government just encourages that kind of attitude. If the government had said, sorry but those people, that's their job, they're entitled to it, but we're not going to bring more people in, so if there's a vacancy of course it's going to be available for unemployed Canadians. It really did result in this being a more racist society.

Q: How has the labour movement reacted?

YB: Some of the unions have been very supportive of the issues facing foreign workers. For example, United Food and Commercial Workers has done a phenomenal job of promoting the rights of migrant farm workers, of promoting the rights of foreign workers in the meatpacking industry and other industries. They've had a lot of programs; they've negotiated some wonderful collective agreement language that establishes rights for people. They've done a wonderful job for foreign workers in this country. Other unions seem to be unsure of the position to take. Other unions are more, how can I put it, perhaps reacting to their members' racist attitudes. They reflect that, which is unfortunate. I think the problem I see is that too many unions have been sitting on the sidelines. I think there's some fundamental union issues that are at stake as well as some fundamental human rights issues. More unions should be taking up the banner. The Alberta Federation of Labour has done a phenomenal job. They've employed me now for four years to work on behalf of foreign workers. Most other federations of labour in this country have not done anything remotely similar. That's unfortunate, because we, as a labour movement, should be ensuring that all workers, regardless of where you are from, be treated with dignity and respect and consistent with the laws of Canada. That's one issue. The other huge issue is that labour rights are being violated. Government is issuing LMOs to employers in unionized workplaces without the agreement of unions. As far as I'm concerned, that results in bargaining in bad faith. Employers are applying for these LMOs without agreement, and the government is allowing it. They're circumventing collective

bargaining rights. I thought we had already agreed that our government is bound by the UN Declaration of Rights which enshrines the right to collective bargaining. I've been saying to unions for years now, you should be challenging this; this should not happen in Canada. So that's number one. Then number two, if you do agree that foreign workers work in your unionized workplaces, then the terms and conditions of their work should be negotiated, which is what United Food and Commercial Workers do. They will negotiate issues on housing, for example, or in Alberta, employees in the meatpacking industry can apply for provincial nominee program, which is one avenue for permanent residency. So, all those kinds of things are encouraged by the union through negotiations with the employer. So that's another huge area that unions should be more involved in.

Q: How can you have a TFW filling a permanent position?

YB: How can you have a temporary worker in a permanent position is a good question. I have no answer. But clearly we've got some issues. The fact that they are TFWs with a time-limited work permit violates seniority provisions, which is fundamental. There was a story of a TFW who had worked and done a good job, and the employer promoted them, still within the bargaining unit. The government said, no you can't do that, because the work permit says he's only allowed to work as a low level. He can't be promoted. You have to apply for a new LMO, new... That is a violation of collective bargaining rights and seniority rights. Lots of employers use that whole process as a backhanded way to get rid of people they don't want. They just don't apply for another LMO, easy. You know where the worst abuse is? People who are injured on the job.

[change tapes]

But there's no room for new ones, which is interesting. Their turnover rate went from 80 something percent to 15% in Brandon.

Let me finish workers compensation, since it's a good point. What we have seen is that workers who've been injured on the job are not having their work permits renewed. It's a good way to get somebody off the books, right? You don't apply for a new LMO for that worker. They end up not being able to get another job because they're injured and can't work. So they end up getting sent home. Takes care of that problem, doesn't it? That's

become quite common. It's interesting, you talk about Chinese workers. I don't know enough about what happened with Chinese workers in the 1800s, but I know a little bit. They were brought in almost as TFWs, denied any kind of civil status, and in fact Chinese people only obtained full status in Canada in 1947. We have a really pathetic history when it comes to Chinese workers in this country. It was interesting; a couple of things happened. They were segregated by the employers, so the employers set up Chinese camps so they wouldn't talk to other workers and wouldn't get to know about their rights. I see the same kind of thing happening. You've got 12 people-- all the foreign workers are put in one house--very much segregated often. The other thing that happened within the labour movement is groups like the Knights of Labor, which were an incredibly progressive union for the 1880s for their time, would not admit into membership Chinese workers because they said Chinese workers were totally at the mercy of the employers and therefore their loyalty would be first always to the employer, not to the union. I find that a fascinating point of view. In one way they were right because the Chinese workers, their position in Canada was so tenuous and did depend on the employer. But it's not a question of loyalty; it's a question of survival. If you know that if you cross your employer they might kidnap you and put you on a plane, which has happened, or they just fire you and you know you can't find another job in this economy, you're being held hostage. It's not a question of loyalty; you're being held hostage. That situation exists now. So it does become a more difficult group of people to organize because of that. They're afraid. It's not loyalty. They're afraid to exercise their rights.

Q: What about the provincial nominee status?

YB: Provincial nominee status is an interesting problem. We had last year over 60,000 foreign workers. We had either 4,500 or 5,000 slots for the provincial nominee program and out of those slots only about half of them are for low-skilled workers. The biggest problem we have is that low-skilled workers have no other avenue for permanent residency. If you look at the program, talk about setting up exploitation. If you're a fast-food outlet, you can sponsor one counter attendant a year for provincial nominee status. Gee, what do you suppose happens? The good employers say, what am I supposed to do?

I've got 10 foreign workers. How am I going to pick one person? I can't do that; it's not fair. So I'm not going to participate. And they're right. The bad employers set it up – who's going to suckhole the best? You get the nominee status. Then what happens is employers, we find employers who might be engaged in the nominee process and they're the ones not paying overtime and stuff. You can't complain because if you do you know what the government does. It pulls the nominee status. The worker pays, not the employer. So our system is set up even to perpetuate those kinds of abuses. And then we've got people, the nominee program says for you to apply for a low-skilled job that requires no prior experience and no real education – like grade 9 for meatpacking industry, maybe grade 12 in some companies – we're going to require that you have to have three years related experience in your country before you come to Canada. So I have for example a young man who's working in a low-skilled job that requires no prior experience, requires no particular English skills. He's got great English skills, he's got grade 12, he's got post-secondary training. He's got two years eight months experience in his country before he came to Canada. But then he worked for over two years in Canada before he applied for his nominee status. They wouldn't take into account that two years. What kind of crap is that? That's exploitative. That is nasty. So I don't have a very high opinion.

Q: What's the answer to all this?

YB: Oh I think it's to shut down the TFW program and have a rational immigration system – an immigration system that is responsive to labour needs, that includes the right to immigrate into low-skilled jobs, and allows people to come here with rights as permanent residents. You know what? There's a study in the States that says people who come with full rights will integrate better. The people would win, the people coming here to work, and Canada would win. We wouldn't create a subclass of people, we wouldn't create this huge pool of undocumented workers. It's a very simple fix.

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